

## Rio Grande Presidents

The destinies of the Rio Grande Railroad were guided over the past century by 14 presidents.

Important dates to remember: Denver & Rio Grande Railway was chartered on Oct. 27, 1870. The Salt Lake City link with the Rio Grande Western was accomplished on March 30, 1883. The mainline was standard gauged in November, 1890, while David Moffat was president. With acquisition of The Rio Grande Western in 1901, an integrated company was developed which was later to become known

as The Denver & Rio Grande Western. The Moffat Tunnel was opened in February, 1928, and the Dolores Cutoff opened in June, 1934. On April 11, 1943, the Denver & Salt Lake Railway became a part of the Rio Grande.

Presidents not shown are Frederick Lovejoy, 1883-1884, Arthur Coppel, 1915 (one week); and Joseph H. Young, 1921-1922. Between 1918 and 1921 the government took over the running of all railroads. The Rio Grande was in receivership at the time and A. R. Baldwin was appointed receiver. No president was elected.



**David H. Moffat**  
1885-1886  
1887-1891



**William S. Jackson**  
1886-1887



**Edward T. Jeffery**  
1891-1912



**Benjamin F. Bush**  
1912-1915

mouth of the South Arkansas, proceeding up the main Arkansas Valley to the summit of the range between the Arkansas and Grand River Valleys; thence by the Grand Valley or other tributary of the "Great Colorado River" to the western border of Colorado and to Salt Lake City.

(4) The Moreno Valley Railway: from the main line near the mouth of Costilla in northern New Mexico to the mines and pineries of the Maxwell estate.

(5) The San Juan Railway: starting on the main line "near or accessible to the Valley of the 'hama' or other western Rio Grande tributary to the San Juan Valley in northwestern New Mexico and southwestern Colorado.

(6) The Gallistee Railway: beginning at a point on the main line in New Mexico between Santa Domingo and San Domingo and Felipe Indian Pueblos and extending thence by the most eligible route to the gold mines and anthracite coal fields of the Placer Mountains.

(7) The Santa Rita Railway: commencing on the main line between Fort Chino and El Paso in New Mexico and extending westerly to the mines of Pinos Altos and Santa Rita, and to the silver mines of the Puerto Mountains.

In 1870 Denver, proposed as Milepost 1, had a population of 4,759 persons; Santa Fe, four hundred miles to the south and the largest community on the proposed railway at the time, counted but 4,755 inhabitants. Between these two contemplated terminals there were possibly 10,000 widely scattered persons, mostly small ranches, subsistence farmers, miners, Mexican settlers, prospectors and mountain men. By counting Indians the total might have reached as high as 15,000. Colorado Springs, Manitou, El Moro and Alamosa had not as yet been founded; Colorado City was but a collection of shacks housing an estimated eighty-one persons; the population of Pueblo was less than 1,000, and Trinidad on the Santa Fe Trail - was a busy village of between 500 and 600 souls.

Incorporation accomplished, Palmer staffed his road with his friends and went to work. In January, 1871, Dr. Bell wrote to an English land speculator, William Blackmore: "We are thoroughly in earnest about this enterprise. The grading has already commenced."

Maybe grading had started but it would be July 28 before the first spike was driven because of the delay in obtaining and transporting English iron rails to build the railway. By the first of September the thirty-

IN 1914 THE RIO GRANDE RAILROAD served the greater part of Colorado and northern New Mexico with steel rails stretching into almost every canyon, tapping the mines and bringing new wealth to the area. (Not to be reproduced without permission of John Norwood.)

# DENVER & RIO GRANDE RAILROAD October 1914

